



*Taxi drivers Market Hill, 1970's*

145.19

#### **c.26.47: Taxis & hansom cabs**

1888

Cabmen's defence fund set up to pay fines incurred when summonsed for 'loitering about streets' - claim insufficient space on cab ranks [26.4.1.4]

1898 05 11

Fair St, Cambridge was the scene of an unpleasant and dangerous accident. A Hansom cab add belonging to Mr Andrews, of Salmon Lane, was on its way to the stable when the horse unaccountably bolted. The animal ran full tilt into the window of a small grocer shop, kept by Mr Cox. Then ensued a melee, in which the window with its frame were utterly demolished. A good deal of stock was damaged, and several articles lying about were smashed. The course kicked wildly, and bled to a dangerous extent from a multitude of cuts inflicted by broken glass and debris.

1898 05 19

Cambridge town council was requested to consider permitting a cabmen's shelter to be placed on the Market Hill. Mr Darwin said that he received a petition asking for the provision of some place for them to warm themselves during the cold months in some central position in the town. At present there was only one cabmen's shelter in the town and that was very widely used. If they provided another the public would gain some advantage because the cabmen, instead of going to the public houses, as they now did, would go to the shelter. The only possible harm it would do was that perhaps it would make the neighbouring public houses sell less beer 1898 05 19

1899 02 17

Yesterday afternoon the attention was attracted by what seemed to be an imposing funeral procession. But this was no ordinary funeral for instead of the usual hearse an open landau led the way and this was occupied by three young men who wore "the trappings of woe" very lightly. Following were nearly a score of hansoms. It is alleged that at the end of last term at student of Queens' college

“ragged” a couple of Freshmen’s rooms. The matter was reported to the University authorities who came to the conclusion he should be sent down for a year. His friends resolved to show their disapproval. Before the train left the company whistled the “Dead March” and it left amid ringing cheers.

1899 05 04

Cambridge cabmen union, p3

1899 10 03

Cambridge cabmen’s union was told that certain ladies had volunteered to provide a cabmen’s shelter on Peas Hill, close to St Edward’s church. The chairman hoped the cabmen would always maintain their proper rank of respectability, and keep themselves above suspicion of rowdyism or anything approaching to it

**1900**

1903 06

Cabmen find good business transporting people who want to see murderer conveyed from Cambridge gaol to the railway station en route to trial at Saffron Walden [26.4.1.3]

1904 02 19

A Cambridge cab proprietor was summonsed for not keeping his cab in a proper condition. A policeman said he found the near side window completely smashed, and the front seat saturated with water. He moved the cushion and found it was mouldy underneath so that it must have been in that condition for some time. The side panel had come away from the body and when it was washed water ran on to the cushions. Defendant said that the driver was responsible for the cleanliness of the cab but magistrates said he should know the state of his vehicles and fined him five shillings 04 02 19

1904 10 18

An additional cabman’s shelter was opened on the ground floor of Cambridge Guildhall in a room formerly used as a temporary police office. There is a stove where for a small payment a man will warm food brought by the cabmen and will also sell tea, coffee and light refreshments. It is comfortably furnished, a few pictures as well as flowers being among the adornments. All cabmen will welcome the shelter where they can dry their clothes in wet weather 04 10 18

1906 06 01

One evening the boots at the Castle Hotel, Cambridge, beckoned a cab from the nearby rank and a lady and gentleman in evening dress stepped in. ‘The New Theatre’ said the gentleman and the cabby quickly crossed the road to the theatre opposite. One shilling was tendered as the fare but the cabby demanded the full amount of 1s 6d. His actions over such a remarkably short drive were sharply criticised but it is only fair to remember that he lost his position on the rank. 06 06 01b

1907 05 03

Trinity Hall undergraduates have subscribed £6 3s. towards the fund for repairing the damage done to Mr Glasscock’s cab on the night of the visit of Kier Hardy to Cambridge. It was smashed beyond repair but as vehicle was not covered by the Riot Damages Act he had no compensation for the loss sustained. At the commencement of term the News published the facts, calling the attention of undergraduates to the heavy loss they had caused and inviting them to put the matter right. 07 05 03

1908

Introduction of motor taxis approved, 10 licences granted, become familiar sight [26.48.1.14]

1908 03 30

Cambridge Watch Committee inspected a motorcab, one of twenty which a London firm wish to place for hire upon the Cambridge streets. It was a luxurious vehicle of the brougham class built to

accommodate four passengers. It is proposed to put the cars on hire on the taximeter principal, the fares being threepence per quarter mile. We understand the cabmen will present a petition against the granting of the application 08 03 30

1908 04 06

Cambridge cabmen opposed plans for 20 motor cabs to be licenced: "Our living is a very precarious one. Most of us are married men with large families and it is as much as we can do to make ends meet as it is. It would mean semi-starvation for some families and ruination for the rest. Some have put all our savings into buying a horse and cab of our own. Motor cabs are unnecessary and would be a constant source of street accidents", they told magistrates 08 04 06a

1908 08 22

The Ortona Motorbus Company, inaugurated a year ago, now possesses five double-deckers, a char-a-banc and a big 'bus'. They have two services from the railway station, one to De Freville and the other to Huntingdon Road. At the well-equipped garage on Hills Road there is always one car that can be despatched the instant a breakdown is reported and even replacing a broken axle can be carried out by their own mechanics. Now country people who used to disfavour these 'machinations of the evil one' patronise them with perfect confidence. CWN 08 08 22 p5

1908 10 09

Smart taxi-cabs will soon be plying for hire in the streets of Cambridge. The Watch Committee have decided to licence ten vehicles of the Provincial Motor Cab Company and as soon as staff, garage and other matters have been arranged the local cabmen will have to face this formidable form of competition, although ten taxies cannot monopolise all the trade CWN 08 10 09

1908 10 16

Cambridge cabmen protested against the decision to licence ten motor taxi-cabs. Ellis Merry said that for weeks the cabmen had not averaged two fares a day and many were on duty 18 hours a day to get a living. If they ousted the hansoms from the streets what would they do during the busy times: when the undergraduates came up it took at least 100 men and cabs to accommodate the railway company but at ordinary times six taxi-cabs could do the work required. CWN 08 10 16 p3

1908 10 23

It would be wrong to license motor taxis in Cambridge, councillor Wootten said. There were 120 hansom cabmen, probably married and with families who owned the cabs they drove and had spent money on renovating them. There were 500 people who were getting a livelihood out of the cabs including those supplying harness and fodder for the horses. It is just like other things in England, inviting foreigners to come in and make as much unemployment as they can CWN 08 10 23

1908 10 23

Councillors were told that they had no power to prevent anyone coming to Cambridge and running motor taxi-cabs, though they could refuse to licence them plying for hire or using the cab ranks. They could have a garage, be on the telephone and receive orders to drive people in their taxis, just as the hansom cab proprietors did. If they were to come it was better that they be licensed. They would create a new, long-distance trade as ordinary street traffic would not pay them. It would be wrong to license motor taxis in Cambridge, councillor Wootten said. There were 120 hansom cabmen, probably married and with families who owned the cabs they drove and had spent money on renovating them. There were 500 people who were getting a livelihood out of the cabs including those supplying harness and fodder for the horses. It is just like other things in England, inviting foreigners to come in and make as much unemployment as they can. CWN 08 10 23

1908 11 07

To meet the competition horse cab men work on Sundays, something not done before [4.9]

1908 11 13

William Cooking, Manager of the Taxi-meter Cab Company of Cambridge was summonsed for driving a taxi-cab at the dangerous speed of 23 miles an hour in Trumpington. He was liable to a penalty of £20 and to have his licence suspended but magistrates only fined him £3. They were determined to put down fast driving through the villages. CWN 08 11 13 p3

1908 11 13

A singular accident in which a taximeter cab played a singular part occurred in Peas Hill. The lamp of taxi cab number 214, driven by a man named Darby, caught the awning connecting a couple of stalls and there was a general upset. The stall of Mr Reynolds was practically demolished and the sweets strewn about with the result that a number of boys had a scramble and pocketed as much as they could. The adjoining drapery stall of Mr Nicholls fared better. The affair caused a great deal of commotion CWN 08 11 13

1908 11 13

William Cooking, Manager of the Taxi-meter Cab Company of Cambridge was summonsed for driving a taxi-cab at the dangerous speed of 23 miles an hour in Trumpington. He was liable to a penalty of £20 and to have his licence suspended but magistrates only fined him £3. They were determined to put down fast driving through the villages. CWN 08 11 13 p3

1909

Are 213 licensed cabs but only 150 spaces on ranks; average number for hire is 50 during vacation, 70 term time [1.5]

1909

Taxi driver fined £2 for driving at dangerous speed - 10 to 12mph [16]

1909

Hansom cabs now much more luxurious with rubber tyres, cabbies wear Top Hats; one has circus horse that sits on haunches & 'thank' for tips [1.6]

1909 01 29

Col. Caldwell, Master of Corpus Christ College, was being driven in a taxi cab back from Milton when owing to the density of the fog, the driver, Charles Glasscock, made a miscalculation where the railway divides from the main road and ran his cab into a stout post. The Master was thrown violently forward and sustained cuts on his face, the driver was taken to hospital. The taxi, the forepart of which was damaged, was towed back during the night. CWN 09 01 29

## **1910**

1910 06 17

One of the biggest mock funerals for many years resulted as a difference of opinion between the authorities of Emmanuel and several junior members of the college as to the proper conduct of a 'bump supper' after which they had lit a bonfire on the lawn in the front court. Some ten undergraduates in their third year were rusticated for a week. A string of hansom cabs appeared at the gates, the 'corpses' clambered on to the roofs and mourners in evening dress and wearing old silk hats swathed with crape accompanied them to the station. 10 06 17a

1910 07 29

A cab man blamed his failure on the change from horse cabs to taxi cabs. He had started as a cab proprietor in January 1905, paying £118 for the cab, horse and harness. He paid his way until after the taxi-cabs came to Cambridge and then became a taxi driver. But he lost that position when his employer gave up the business. He had sold his horse, harness and cab at a considerable loss and now had nothing but a small quantity of furniture which was not enough to meet the landlord's claim. 10 07 29a

1911 02 17

A taxi driver was summoned for dangerous driving. Richard Glasscock, cabdriver was driving a horse attached to a brougham on King's Parade with three passengers when a taxi came out of Bene't Street on the wrong side of the road at about 12 mph. He had to pull the horse on to the middle of the road and hit it with the whip to get away. The taxi caught the hub of the hind wheel and smashed the springs. Its driver had said his steering gear had been locked for two days. The Mayor said taxi-cabs were driven too fast and fined the driver five shillings 11 02 17

1911 03 10

At the head of the funeral procession was a hansom. Seats on the top with legs dangling over the side, was the undertaker. His mournful calling seemed to have cast a settled gloom over his countenance. His eyes were mournful and sad, and his clothing was of the deepest black, save for his socks (he wore no shoes), which were of the brightest scarlet. In his hand he waved a long whip (an emblem of his mournful trade), with a bright handkerchief to match his wonderful socks tied to it. Behind the hearse were nine carriages filled with loudly lamenting mourners – extract from a report of a 'Mock Funeral' for an undergraduate sent down from university 11 03 10b

1911 05 12

The camp of the Loyal Suffolk Hussars Regiment of Yeomanry has been pitched in Grantchester Meadows and already the greater part of the canvas village has been erected and presents a very picturesque appearance. There is a large marquee where men will take their meals and portable wooden buildings for the officers' mess. But it is a long walk into Cambridge and local motor-bus and taxi-cab proprietors and waggonette and cab proprietors might find it worth their while to run a service. There will be something like 500 men in camp and many who will gladly pay to be taken in to town for the evening. 11 05 12h

1911 05 19

In a little side passage in King Street a barrel organ was draped with black and mauve as hansoms, taxis and growlers arrived in their dozens. The coffin was covered with crepe surmounted by cap and gown while plumes barely concealed the lines of an express delivery van in which sat the 'corpse' smartly dressed in grey suit and felt bowler. There were about 100 horses and motor vehicles in the procession to the station where the tops of the railway carriages were filled with figures clad in varying garb from pyjamas and rowing shorts to mourning suits and dress suits. It was the most imposing mock funeral ever seen in Cambridge 11 05 19d & e

1912 02 16

A Cambridge man, Mr H.P. Allin, has recently invented a novel and ingenious indicator for taxicabs. Hitherto it has been difficult at night to ascertain whether an approaching taxi is engaged or not. His device consists of a metal case in the front of which is fixed a glass panel bearing the words 'For Hire' and illuminated from behind with a suitable artificial light. A hinged flap is connected by rods to the flag of the meter. On the cab being hired, and the flag lowered, the flap falls and hides the sign. 12 02 16b

1912 03 08

A mock funeral started from the "corpse's" lodging in Lensfield Road. There was a long line of taxis, hansoms and even four-wheelers stretching some distance down Trumpington Street. There was no elaborate "hearse" as in previous funerals: the body was placed quite simply in a hansom bearing the words "Alas! My poor brother" and smoked cigars throughout. His "cabby's" hat was draped with crepe while the majority of the fancifully-dressed mourned wore complimentary black-eyes out of respect for the 'deceased'. There were an extraordinary number of "flappers" – quite stunning flappers some of them were too. One of the best was a suffragette and Mrs Pankhurst also figured in the procession. 12 03 08

1912 12 21

Walter Mansfield (“Lame Walter”), best known of Cambridge cabmen, cab fails to pass inspection, friends open subscription to buy a new landau. 12 12 21

1913 03 14

Four Cabmen were summonsed for taking their cabs on to the Senate House rank when it was already fully occupied and leaving their horses and cabs unattended. Pc Pettitt said there were four unattended cabs standing two abreast facing the reverse way to the other five waiting for business. The rank was authorised for two cabs during the week and three extra on Saturday because the Market Hill rank could not be used then. One man said he’d gone to the lavatory on Market Hill and had asked others to look after his horse. More had been to the coffee shop or had gone to breakfast. They must obey the byelaws. 13 03 14 p8 CIP

1914 01 02

A shocking fatality occurred in the early hours of Christmas morning on the road between Great Wilbraham and Fulbourn. A driver for the Provincial Motor Cab Company overturned the taxicab he was driving and was pinned underneath in his seat, sustaining fatal injuries to his head. The accident occurred about one o’clock in the morning and he lay in the road until found by the Wilbraham mail driver at 6.40. The car was badly knocked about. The offside front wheel was broken completely and thrown several yards up the road. 14 01 02 & a

1914 07 24

National Union of Vehicular Workers trade union meeting on Parker’s Piece heard many workers were underpaid and underfed. When taxis came to Cambridge the old cab-drivers should have been given the chance of learning the new trade. Instead the taxis were the property of private firms 14 07 24

1914 12 04

George Lucas, a taxi driver, was driving along Huntingdon Road, when after passing the Traveller’s Rest, he saw a large portion of an elm tree that had been blown across the road. He could not stop in time and the car crashed into the tree. The windscreen and headlights were shattered but no occupant was hurt. Immediately afterwards another large piece of the tree fell and the road was completely blocked. Police in a taxi hurried to the scene. They removed the side-lamps of their motor and put one each side of the obstruction to warn traffic of the danger. Then with saws and pickaxes borrowed from people in the vicinity they cut a way through the obstruction

1914 12 18

Taxis allowed Market Hill near Great St Mary’s

1917 11 10

Death of Phil Stocker cabman with slowest horse - had specialised at night, his ancient four-wheeler meeting late trains; now only ‘Lame Walter’ left - 17 11 10

## **1920**

1920 04 24

Varsity garage engineer sues taxi-cab proprietor over repairs

1920 11 17

‘Chariot of fire’ rag –cab soaked in petrol – Ch 20 11 17e, f

1921 03 30

William Radford taxi catches fire, Arbury Rd – 21 03 30b

1923 08 07

A driver for the Taxi Side-car company was summoned for driving a motor cycle taxi cab in a dangerous manner in Castle Street, Cambridge. Walter Langford, labourer, spoke to seeing a taxi side-car coming down Castle Hill. At the crossing it dodged in front of a motor car, and the side-car caught the front of the motor car which struck the side of Messrs Clark's shop in Northampton Street. The motor car hit a man and knocked him down.

1924 02 06

Wallman, taxi cab bankruptcy, p5

1925 06 06

"I cannot go out the backway or the front door without she throws some insult at me. I cannot knock a nail into the wall, she threw two pails of water over the taxi-sidecar that was standing in the road, and if a taxi is left there she goes for a policeman", said Mrs Ellis Riseley of Russell Street, Cambridge, the wife of a taxi-sidecar owner in enumerating some of the failings of her neighbour. In reply the neighbour said they kept a couple of taxi-sidecars outside the house from early morning until late at night, she was simply throwing a pail of water over the pavement for the sake of cleanliness because of all the oil and petrol which came from the taxi 25 06 06

1926

Motor-cycle taxis introduced carrying two passengers & a little luggage 85 01 25

1927

Trojan motor taxis start, quickly oust motor-cycles 85 01 25

1927 04 12

Two Cambridge taxi men applied for hackney carriage licences to ply for hire at Newmarket, particularly during race week. Both had invested all their spare capital to purchase three cottages in the town, having been persuaded this would enable them to obtain a licence. The Clerk said four others had also applied. It was manifestly unfair. Newmarket men were supplying the town's wants for the other 44 weeks of the year, during which time they were often standing idle. Yet when the races came and they expected to recoup themselves they were rushed off the road by these men from Cambridge who brought in their fares and wait to take them back at night. They want to compete with Newmarket cabmen on the streets. The licences were refused.

1928 04 19

Members of the Cambridge Horse Club spent a jolly time at their annual dinner. It was formed 35 years ago when there were a great number of hansom cabs and horses and flies in Cambridge and if a man lost a horse he went round from house to house and collected. Some people thought that was rather objectionable and a man named William Wallis conceived the idea of a club for people who owned horses. It only cost 1d a day to join and they still had 50 members; when they considered the increase in motor traffic it was feather in their cap to know they stood safe financially. The Chief Constable said Cambridge was losing horses very rapidly but he hoped they would not all disappear.

1929 03 15 c

A Cambridge undergraduate was fined for an assault on a taxicab driver who attempted to push him off the running-board of a stationary cab. It took place after a bump supper when he was in a very excited condition. Robert Osborne said he went to the ADC Theatre and left his cab on the rank on Jesus Lane. The undergrad and others came along the road and turned the starting handle of the taxis. He jumped on his running-board and would not get off, so he pushed him off. The lad then hit him several times.

**1930**

1930 12 27

The booking hall at Cambridge railway station was the scene on Christmas Eve of one of the most extraordinary happenings ever witnessed. As a taxicab was being driven back to the station rank its driver suffered a seizure; the vehicle careered through the booking hall entrance and crashed into the collapsible iron gates near the ticket collector's box. If the barrier had been wide open it would have gone right on to the track, and a train was just due. 30 12 27

1932 04 30

Cambridge parted with the last of its hansom cabs a long time ago, but there are still a couple of four-wheelers to be seen on the stands, one driven by George Jolley and the other by Arthur Carter. George has been driving for 40 years but says things are not what they were. Cabbies used to assist undergraduates who were locked out of their college by backing the hansom against the wall to allow the belated reveller to climb over, negotiate the spikes on top and slip in unobserved. 'Growlers' were always available for mock funerals. 32 04 30

1932 05 16

Flames reached the roof of King and Harper's garage in Jesus Lane when a taxi-cab caught fire as it was being filled with petrol. Cars in the garage were pushed out and the blaze extinguished. The cab was taken to the Thompson's Lane depot but some part of it still smouldered for at four in the morning it again blazed up. This time it was totally destroyed. 32 05 16

1933 02 23

Sidney Wisbey, a hackney carriage taxi proprietor from Wellington Passage, told the court he started driving in 1908. He had bought an old Buick, VR 6151, because he wanted to use the chassis and had made one car out of two. He altered the body from a box van to a saloon and changed the colour to blue. He tried it out but the engine was no good so he put it back in the garage. 33 02 23

1933 04 01

Cambridge taxi drivers protested against the amount charged by the Railway Company for the use of the station ranks. Each owner is charged £6 a year, which they regard as excessive and want reduced to £2. But the LNER says it has already cut it from £9 and that drivers could pay eighteen pence weekly. Although taxi earnings had fallen off in recent years most paid the rent without difficulty. They also had the use of a shelter provided by the Company. 33 04 01a photo: 33 04 03c

1934 01 11

George Gault of Blossom Street has been a horse and motor cab driver in Cambridge for 41 years – 18 years of taxi work and the remainder with a horse cab. During the past 18 years he has had two Ford cars – 16 years with one. He is a familiar figure on the rank at Hyde Park Corner and has carried many undergraduates who are now far across the seas. Now in his 63<sup>rd</sup> year he is a total abstainer and non-smoker 34 01 11

1936 07 02

Improvements have been made at Cambridge station yard to provide better parking accommodation and cope with the heavy vehicular traffic. Three car parks have been allotted with an in-way and out-way for 'through' traffic. The Eastern Counties Omnibus Company's services are located at the south side of the passenger station and will 'set down' and 'pick up' at the same place. The taxi-cab accommodation has also been divided into three parks with an in-way and out-way between them. It is hoped that with the co-operation of the owners of road motor-vehicles this will facilitate safe movement into and out of the station premises 36 07 02

1938 03 25

'Luxicabs', an entirely new fleet of taxis has begun operation in Cambridge, providing a handy and economical alternative to a private hire for driving to dances, shopping or trips into the country. Long or short journeys will cost eightpence per mile (about £1.80 at today's prices). Luxicabs are saloons of the latest type, notable for their modern, streamlined bodywork, luxurious riding comfort and swift, silent performance. They will be in the charge of courteous chauffeurs and the taximeters will be



concealed from the outside public. In view of the difficulties of parking private cars such an attractive service will meet a wide need 38 03 25b

1939 02 14

Camtax one year old today – 39 02 14b

### **1940**

1947 08 12

Taxi radio controls – film, p5

1947 08 20

Taxi radio control savings, p5

1947 09 20

Cambridge the first town in England with radio-controlled hire cars [26.48.3.7]

1948 10 08

Sixty-four years' service as a cab driver is a fact of which 79-year-old Mr George Clark of Gloucester Terrace, Cambridge, can be justly proud. It was one day in 1884 when the young George, at the age of 15 first drove a cab for his father. Finding he liked the occupation he continued with it and has driven for one firm, Easy's for the past 44 years. In his younger days he lived in that gay period at the end of the last century when there was no such thing a mechanised vehicles and the cabs were the old four-wheel horse-drawn type and there were only ten or eleven "cabbies" altogether. The only time he was not driving a hansom or a taxi was during the South African War and the 1914-18 war 47 10 08

1947 08 12

Taxi radio controls – film, p5 47 08 12

### **1950**

1950 11 23

A young taxi proprietor and motor mechanic of Barton Road, Comberton, argued his right to erect two petrol pumps in front of his bungalow. He told a planning inspector the house had been built about 1937 and was previously used as a post office and later for a taxi hire service. The petrol pumps would enable him to make a better living. The road past his house was a fairly busy one and with the custom of farmers he hoped to be able to sell 200 to 400 gallons a week.

1951 07 27

Two hundred London taxis took the road this morning under orders for the first time, over a short wave radio network system pioneered by Pye Radio technicians from Cambridge. In London, at a big party attended by top stage and screen stars to celebrate the inauguration of this new radiocab service was Mr Harry Woolgar, a director of Pye Telecommunications Ltd. He said: "This is the largest radio-telephone system taxi network in Europe and we are planning a larger system capable of directing 1,000 taxis". Pye got the job because it pioneered fitting radio telephones to police cars and ambulances and was the first to use short-wave radio for agricultural use 51 07 27

1952 06 14

Camtax & Bedford Lodge bankruptcy, 52 06 14 p5

1952 05 31

Camtax, first to be radio-controlled, goes into voluntary liquidation; (Camtax (1953) formed; followed amalgamation Airflow Taxis & Newnham Car Hire Service which first became A& N cabs) [85 11 07] [26.48.5.18]

1957 12 18

Listeners to the BBC "Women's Hour" heard Doris Foster, of Occupation Road, talking about her job as radio receptionist at a Cambridge taxi firm. She handles hundreds of calls a day with fantastic speed and ease. Most drivers memorise landmarks such as pillar boxes but one knows practically every street, the position of each house and can go straight to any number in the pitch dark. 57 12 18a

## **1960**

1961 05 19

Frederick Andrews, has been a Cambridge taxi-driver for about eight years on and off and finds it 'quite relaxing and leisurely. As a boy he went into the cinema industry, first as a page, then working his way up to the projection room and finally to the film studios. He worked at the New Theatre for quite a time, then bought a car and became a taxi-driver. He also spends a good deal of his spare time compering child dance shows. 61 05 19

1963 09 12

Taxis annual inspection – photos – 63 09 12

1968 01 30

Taxi licence plates sell for over £1,000, (by 1974 £3,000) 68 01 30

1968 12 09

Walter Easy drives Cambridge taxis for 50 years; was provincial car company in 190 which started at old tram depot in East Road; father one of first to have motor transport – T-model Ford, later motor-cycle taxis – details – 68 12 09

## **1970**

1970 05 37

Taxi drivers push cabs – photo – 70 05 27

1970 10 07

Taxis running on propane gas with United Taxis private gas tanks in Hills Road – 70 10 07a

1972 0 25

ABC Taxis of Cambridge, have taken over one of their biggest rivals, United Taxis Ltd, and now run one of the largest fleets of hire cars in the area. United were in the news two years ago when they decided to run all their cabs on petroleum gas which, they claimed, gave a considerable cost saving in spite of expensive conversions to the engines 72 05 25

1974 04 13

Taxi licence plates sell for over £3,000) 74 94 13

1974 05 16

Taxi fares are to go up in Cambridge by 24% if the city council agree. The new rate for the first three-quarters of a mile of any journey will be 26p. The present rate is 18p. Subsequent rates will remain at 3p per quarter-mile.

1975 03 27

A bus ride from the outskirts of Cambridge to the city centre is slightly cheaper than a taxi fare. It's a close thing if you share a taxi with three other people, but if four are travelling together the private car journey, even with a 10p parking fee, is still the cheapest course. Camtax say from Cherry Hinton to the city centre the fare would be 53p. plus 2p VAT

1977 05 03

Dennis is a Cambridge taxi driver who finishes work at two or three in the morning. But when he gets home there is no way he can get a night's sleep because he, his wife and nine-month-old baby share one room, 12 feet by nine, in which they have to live, eat and sleep. They leave a two-bar electric fire burning to dry out the damp. The family share a three-bedroomed terrace with two other families. There is no bathroom, the outside lavatory does not flush properly. There is just one kitchen. The house in Gwydir Street Cambridge is owned by the city council. The Housing manager agrees that conditions are far less than ideal but says the property is the last resort for dealing with real emergencies. A few years ago the family would have been split up with the wife and child going into a social services hostel.

1979 07 07

Cambridge's oldest taxi driver Ernie Zarattini has taken his final fare – aged 80. And he has disclosed some of the cheeky goings-on he has witness during 39 years as a cab driver. On one occasion he picked up a couple who wanted to go to Regent Street. “Suddenly I saw them misconducting themselves on the floor of the cab. I said ‘Not for half-a-crown you don’t’ and flung them out”, he said. Fares used to be eight pence – old money – for the first mile and tuppence-a-mile after that, but now customers have to pay 45p for the first three-quarters of a mile and 25p for every one-sixth of a mile after that.

1979 12 14

Still-born babies are being ferried by taxi from Cambridge's maternity hospital to the mortuary at Addenbrooke's Hospital because of inadequate facilities at Mill Road. Twice a week a hospital porter makes the grisly two-mile journey carrying an anonymous coffin – a small stone-coloured metal box. This morbid shuttle-service accounts for just a few of the two dozen emergency runs made each week by S & H Taxis, often with a police escort to beat the traffic jams.

**1980**

1980 11 26

A clampdown on the 600 motorists who every day defy traffic bans along King's Parade, Cambridge, will involve blocking off the road outside the Senate House to all traffic except cyclists and emergency vehicles. But it has angered taxi drivers who say it would make longer journeys. The move is part of a plan to improve city centre conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. 80 11 26

1982 03 12

Two of Cambridge's best-known taxi firms are now under the same ownership. The Harris family, which owns the Camtax car-hire firm, has bought control of United Taxis from its owner, John Phillips for a ‘considerable’ sum. The deal, one of the best-kept Cambridge business secrets for years, came as a surprise to other operators in the competitive taxi and car-hire business. 82 03 12a

1984 03 04

Astonished shoppers saw Prince Edward sipping champagne in Kings Parade and shouting at young people dancing on the roof of a taxi. It was his off-beat way of letting people know about the charity show he is producing for the University Rag Week. But his elaborate publicity stunt almost flopped when he failed to find the old London taxi he needed. So he asked the News for help and as a result Londoner Maurice Hamilton made a special trip to Cambridge with his cab. 84 03 03

1986 08 28

Fury over daytime ban taxis 86 08 28

1987 03 13

Cambridge's traditional transport, the bicycle, will be deliberately used to slow down city centre traffic. The medieval central streets will be made even narrower which will make it even more difficult to overtake bikes. Traffic restrictions will also be introduced, including the banning of taxis. The streets have been reshaped and cleaned up with York stone used in areas considered ‘visually

sensitive'. But workmen in Trinity Street have been delayed by having to remove hundreds of wooden blocks dating back to the days of horse-drawn vehicles 87 03 13b

1988 01 07

A taxi guard of honour lined Cherry Hinton High Street in tribute to John Phillips, the big-hearted former cabbie who helped raise millions of pounds for health care. Twenty-seven cars were on parade as the funeral cortege made its way to St Andrew's Church which was packed with mourners including past and present Mayors and MPs. Mr Phillips was a former director of United Taxis and ran his own firm. He was chairman of an appeal for Addenbrooke's Hospital scanner unit opened by Prince Charles in 1981 and a magnetic response scanner opened by the Duchess of Kent last year. 88 01 07a

1988 03 04

A novel new executive taxi service may be launched in Cambridge. 'Destination Direct' will transport executives from the company car park to open ground nearest their destination – by helicopter. It will feature Bell Jet Ranger four-seaters and the three-seater Hughes 500's travelling at about 100 road miles per hour. The cost of a journey from Cambridge to Heathrow would be about £470 return. The man behind the scheme believes there are a lot of people who would make use of the advantages 88 03 04

1988 03 25

Camtax revolutionised the Cambridge taxi service with the introduction of a 24-hour telephone link to their headquarters in 1938 and in 1947 they were granted the country's number one licence to operate radio-controlled cars, following experimental work with Pye. At first there were only 15 vehicles, all painted Cambridge blue with smartly-uniformed drivers. Now it has a fleet of 65 cars transporting 3,000 people every day. 88 03 25a

1989 06 17

Taxis converted to take wheelchairs to start – 89 06 17

